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March 7, 2000

Mr. Thomas Hannigan, Director
Department of Water Resources
1416 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 94236-0001

Subject: Comments on California Water Plan Update

Dear Mr. Hannigan:

I was unable to attend the scoping hearing on the subject of the next California Water Plan Update held by the Department in Bakersfield on February 15, 2000 and wish to submit my comments by this letter.

My interest in this derives from working on the original California Water Plan in the 1950's and from serving on DWR's advisory committee's for the recent two Bulletin 160 update publications. My current interest also includes serving as a member of the CALFED Bay-Delta Advisory Council as a representative of the Kern County Water Agency and as a Trustee representing the Agency on the Board of the Southern California Water Committee.

As part of the CALFED discussions over the past five years, there have been nearly endless discussions of the need to assure that there will be adequate water available--in reliable quantities, with adequate water quality and at affordable costs-- to meet the needs of California and its population as it grows into the future. The CALFED solutions have been focused on "fixing the Delta," that is, restoring the environmental resources of the Delta and reducing the conflicts between the many competing demands for water service within or out of the Delta. The CALFED program includes many elements that will enhance water supplies, increase the efficiencies of water movement in and through the Delta, make currently developed supplies go further by increasing both urban and agricultural water use efficiency, and add new water supplies by means of storage and groundwater programs and water transfers.

Although many participants argued that the CALFED Program should meet the future water needs of the State in twenty or thirty years, this was not accepted as the program's scope. Rather, it was decided to concentrate on the "Delta Solution." There is wisdom in this approach from the standpoint of the mix of State and federal agencies involved. Implementation needs to begin at the earliest possible time on the many program elements. To include statewide, long range water supply planning would complicate and possibly disrupt stakeholder support for the CALFED program. That support is tenuous as it is.

Further, CALFED is a joint activity of a dozen or more State and federal water and natural resources agencies. The only one of those agencies that has a legislative mandate to be responsible for planning for the satisfaction of the ultimate water needs of California is the Department of Water Resources.

Therefore, it appears to me that the Department should dedicate the planning effort for the next update of the California Water Plan, Bulletin 160-2003 to answering the questions about:

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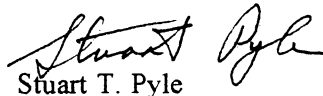
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What will be the water needs of California in 2020 and 2030?
How far will the programs included in the CALFED Solution go in meeting these needs?
What additional quantities of water will be needed?
What options are there for making necessary water available?

I do not view this as a simple task or one to be taken lightly. The total future economic well being of the State rests on having adequate water supplies to support the needs of the population. I hope you will evaluate the Department's capabilities to fund the ongoing statewide planning program that includes the Bulletin 160 updates under its usual budget structure, and if that falls short, that you will seek additional funding from the Legislature.

I believe that the next water plan should be highly visible to the public. It should be well funded and should be adequately staffed with well qualified people. It also needs to be actively supported by the Governor and by Legislative leaders who have an interest in water matters--it must not become a dismal battle between those supporting the environment and those interested in the State's economic development. Neither can it be a solution that says agriculture has the bulk of the water, let's just convert that to urban or environmental use. It is a challenge. It won't be easy, but it is highly important that it be given the leadership and the funding to get the job done.

Sincerely;


Stuart T. Pyle

cc:

Mike Madigan, Chairman, California Water Commission
State Senator Jim Costa,, Chairman, Senate Agriculture and Water Committee
Assemblyman Mike Machado, Chairman, Assembly Water,Parks and Wildlife Committee